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***GOVERNOR RECOGNIZES JANUARY AS NATIONAL STALKING  
AWARENESS MONTH***

PHOENIX – January is National Stalking Awareness Month, and victim advocates across the country are using this month as an opportunity to educate the public about the pervasive crime that affects nearly 1.4 million Americans per year. Governor Janet Napolitano encourages both victims and communities to take stalking seriously and learn about the dangers of stalking.

“Stalking far too often is invisible to everyone except the victim,” Governor Napolitano said. “National Stalking Awareness Month helps bring stalking to the attention of everyone so that when stalking victims need help, we will all respond appropriately – doing everything we can to keep them safe and hold offenders accountable for their actions.”

Stalking – typically defined as a course of conduct directed at a specific person that would cause a reasonable person to feel fear – is a criminal offense under the laws of all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government. Although its prevalence is high, public awareness that stalking is a crime remains dangerously low. Statistics indicate that 1-in-12 women and 1-in-45 men will be stalked in their lifetime, for an average duration of almost two years.

Victims are encouraged to trust their instincts and understand that stalkers are unpredictable and dangerous. Anyone in imminent danger should call 911. Victims can also receive support from a crisis hotline, victim services agency, or a domestic violence or rape crisis program. These agencies can help victims devise a safety plan, learn about local laws, find services, and take additional steps, such as seeking a protective order.

To assist law enforcement efforts, victims should carefully document evidence by writing down the times, dates and places they are stalked. Victims should also keep e-mails, phone messages, letters or anything else sent to them by the stalker. It is also important to alert friends, family members, roommates and co-workers about the stalking and enlist their help and support.

Governor Napolitano also encourages citizens to educate themselves on the dangers of stalking and support stalking victims by listening, showing support and never blaming the victim for the crime. For more information, visit the National Center for Victims of Crime, Stalking Resource Center at <http://www.ncvc.org/src> or contact the Governor’s Adviser for Victims, Dan Levey, at 602-364-2235.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, please visit [www.azgovernor.gov](http://www.azgovernor.gov).